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F. O. B. Dixie

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

ALONG a river in Virginia the big house stands. There was blood on the concrete where the mountain folk had come out of the coves to work at the looms in Marion. At Charleston the Cooper and the Ashley Rivers flow together to make the Atlantic Ocean. Less than forty miles from Aiken where Hamilton Basso sneered at the sterility of millionaires is Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road where the empty belly of a grandma may ache for the filling comfort of a turnip. Atlanta has demonstrated that if the Lost Cause is gone with the wind, it still sells like Coca Cola. At Baton Rouge they put poor Huey in his grave but the Cajuns still seine for shrimp in the bayous and the hill billies sometimes stop scratching their fiddles to scratch their eroded lands. The roses are red in Mississippi. The stars lie where they fell in Alabama. Up the Big River ladies decay in houses as big as Virginia's. And, lawdy, lawdy, the niggers are everywhere!

JONATHAN DANIELS

But the books are not. Like cotton, Southern literature is for the export trade. A Southern book may create the angry Asheville of Thomas Wolfe (though the local library doesn't have it on its shelves). A book about the South may even help create a civil war, if Mrs. Stowe in heaven doesn't mind my saying so. A play based on a book about Georgia may draw the indignant oratory of a Georgia Congressman. Almost anything can happen to a book about the South except be read in the South. Perhaps the reason is that all Southerners—the Saints and Monsters of Miss Ellen Glasgow's ironic division—are too busy with either monstrosity or manners. Perhaps, as the late Clarence Cason wrote, the trouble may be that the Southerner who follows the breeze out of doors cannot read books in the moonlight beside a jessamine bush. But whatever the cause may be, Southern books, even when written by Southerners, are written for readers outside of the South. Certainly, publishers being business men, they are published for readers outside of the South.

This could be proved very elaborately by a determination of the paucity of Southern bookshops, by the rarity and the parsimony (poor but proud) of Southern libraries. Set it down as a fact, not needing proof but deserving consideration. Books in the South have always been rare. A library of a thousand books in the Old South was about as rare as a plantation of a thousand slaves. Both grow more numerous as the years pass just as the aristocrats do. But so rare, so precious books were that there were ladies in South Carolina who copied whole romances of Walter Scott for their sisters in Alabama rather than send them the book. Let a modern try that on "Gone With the Wind."

Rare then, books in the South are rare now. And in the South as elsewhere, there is a fundamental difference in a literature written for a people about themselves and a literature written about a people for other people. In a very real sense books about Bali and books about Birmingham have a similar quality. Neither may be travel books as librarians classify them but both take the reader to a little known land, providing in the journey a vicarious escape for the reader and a blessed freedom for the writer. The same rule normally applies to literary return from the present into the past. And such escape and freedom are legitimate sire and dam of romance. The alien and anachronistic South has shown that the romance will be borne from the alliance though the conception be described by new realists in terms of rape.

Down in Dixie when the stream of Southern literature began its present flow in Virginia Mr. James Branch Cabell very frankly took his skill with words to a land called Poictesme. Mr. Cabell was a very candid man who among his other ironies understood that the art of true fiction is the art of high lying, the making of a sweet semblance of truth out of nothing more than ink and paper, intangible desire, and nebulous memory. Mr. Cabell was an honest liar. And yet so perverse is mankind that he seemed a sly worker while the new writers, who either fool themselves or their readers or both with a persisting romance which wears the solemn mask of realism, are regarded as forthright men and women and thousands of readers in Northampton and Nebraska read them with a pretty faith that they are attaining an understanding of a fascinating but spine-chilling South.

La de da. This whole South of the books is Poictesme: the land that lies beyond the nose of the book readers, that famed country which lies outside the circle of the reading lamp. The details change but the spirit does not. It is walking distance from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Grace Lumpkin. My mind, perhaps perversely, insists on jumping the years to "Porgy" from the "Hunchback of

Next Week

THE ESSAYS OF T. S. ELIOT
Reviewed by Howard Mumford Jones

JEFFERSON IN POWER
By CLAUDE G. BOWERS
Reviewed by James Truslow Adams

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Notre Dame." And how far I wonder is it from the dungeons of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" to the dark recesses in human living of William Faulkner? I may be the only man in the world who thinks it but Erskine Caldwell seems to me to be at least the literary bastard of Charles Dickens. And now come the proletarians, God bless their romantic souls. How long have the good been struggling with the wicked across the printed page!

The colonel fought carpetbaggers and the scalawags and saved the misses and the girls. And the carpetbaggers were bad. But Mr. Albion Winegar Tourgee, who was one himself, wrote stirring stuff, too, and in his books the carpetbaggers fought the wicked Ku Kluxers. And brave white men have fought bad Negroes. And good Negroes have struggled against bad white men. Men have fought for the precious things against the new degeneracy. And the new progress has fought the old decay. And now the tenant struggles against the grasping landlord—a new tenant informed in the doctrines of Marx. (How much truth is there in the Southern legend that tenants lie awake all night figuring how to cheat the landlord, and the landlord lies awake figuring how to cheat the tenant?) And now the mill-worker fights the fat industrial baron. And at the same time—I thank her for it—Miss Ellen Glasgow points the old verities again in a troubled world. Is it possible that the old verities are as romantic as the new ones?

All these are true conflicts. They exist in the South and blood has been shed and heads have been cracked in righteousness about all of them. But also true conflicts are the struggles of Christian and Saracen, patriot and Red coat, cops and robbers, Robin Hood and the sheriff of Nottinghamshire, cowboys and Indians, Picts and Scots, Beowulf and the Dragon, York and Lancaster, the Democrats and the Republicans. As a Southerner, not for one minute would I stop the writing about any of the conflicts in the South. The world is diverted even when the world is not informed. For literary purposes, I would not even object to the making of a hero out of my Southern neighbor with whom I am in present conflict because he won't cut the weeds off his vacant lot next to my house. I've already made a hero with a grievance out of myself but he's drawn first blood with his mosquitoes. But I know that he could tell a tale in which I would seem an unpleasant busybody breaking the languor proper to a Southern summer. If the weeds are cut down, the weeds will grow again. You see it would be a novel of Southern futility and so would be certain of a wide reading.

I lay no complaint against this romance. But all those who insist that this or that (I think I've done it myself) is "a veracious portrayal of the South," I can only refer to Pontius Pilate. I am not at all sure what the South is myself. There is an infinite variety about my neighbors and also a sometimes discouraging sameness, infinite variety and remarkable sameness being qualities common to all men everywhere so far as I have been able to judge. Of course, Erskine Caldwell's Jeeter Lester is a true picture of a man, but with slight differences in stage set he might be found living in a degradation and poverty as deep in Jersey as in Georgia. Was it in Jersey or Georgia where a child died recently of trying in hunger a supplementary feeding of the paint on the walls? (It must have been Jersey; the walls aren't painted in Georgia.) They tell the truth who write about the degradation of tenant farmers and the exploitation of tenant farmers. But surely no sensible person would suggest that exploitation of man by man is an element of local color. Lechery, greed, poverty, ignorance, murder, incest, rape, chivalry, nobility, rascality, laziness, and sacrifice are all in the South. Where are they not? Surely the Southerner is more energetic than generally described if he invented them all.

But the South in America is uniquely romantic! I doubt it. There would have been no Cotton South had there not been mills in Manchester. And the same thing is true of Southern Romance. Indeed, it is entirely possible that romance is with cotton the chief export crop of the region and for the same reason. Of course, the heat gave the first Southerners good reason for sitting in the shade, and the slaves gave him a better chance to do it. So he dreamed. And the abolitionists painted him so black that he was forced into dreaming pretty fine dreams about himself in self-defense. And the war left him nothing pleasant but the past, the shade, and his own glorifying imagination. Admit that. Just as it may be admitted that the Southern soil is suited to cotton. But so great has been the demand for Southern romance from Thomas Nelson Page to the present proletarians, that the Southerners have obliged. A good many of us even outside the books have begun to regard ourselves as sheer romantics. I myself have Ravenel Carter moods and also Jeeter Lester ones. Nor is this restricted to Southerners. I noticed that a good many of the former employees of Mr. Lucky Luciano reported that they began life under the magnolias as Southern belles. Let a Yankee get enough money and he takes the Seaboard or the Atlantic Coast Line South to set himself up, along with the misses and the girls, in a pretty reproduction of life Befo' de Wa'. Let the band play Dixie and none will shout louder than the sons of Naples and Nantucket. Probably even at this late date the most widely read romantic novel about the South was written by a lady born in Litchfield, Connecticut, who became familiar with the evils of slavery while living in Cincinnati, Ohio. The incurably romantic Yankee who made nutmegs out of wood takes gratefully in return a literature made often by the same process. That's trade and trade is the basis of civilization and perhaps also of literature.

Mr. James Branch Cabell is dead, having committed suicide by sawing off his first name, but the South remains Poictesme for all that Gisèle works in a cotton mill, Saraïde chops cotton, and Dorothy ought to be confined. For one I hope it will remain Poictesme. It is the name for one industry as the Cotton Kingdom is the name for another. Pessimists are telling us that Brazil, Egypt, and India are going to get our cotton acres. But I doubt whether that would be a loss comparable to the discovery that romance properly tended will grow as well in the onion fields and the sugar beet lands, even in city streets, as in the Cotton Kingdom. But perhaps the loss is inevitable. One day the South is going to learn to read as well as write and then the show will be over.

Portrait of Two Unhappy Young People

By DOROTHEA ALYEA

THIS passionate child so much in love with folly,
With momentary joy, with kitten's play,
Giving a kiss with mistletoe and holly,
Another bauble for the holiday;
How should she know who has no wish for proving
The strict division in a lover's mind—
An "easy conquest" meaning lighter loving
And "chastity" a truer womankind.
With no such thoughtfulness will she give over,
But as a child goes coasting down a steep,
The bright snow flashing as the runners cover
The frozen ground, so swiftly will she heap
In the loose hands of some reluctant lover
The virtue he had rather she would keep.

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A MEDICAL STATION IN THE TROPICS.

Globe Trotting for Humanity

THE ODYSSEY OF AN AMERICAN DOCTOR. By Victor G. Heiser. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1936. $3.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE ROOSEVELT

WHEN I was asked to review Dr. Heiser's book I hesitated to accept. I know Dr. Heiser personally. There is no more delightful companion and I wish to keep his friendship. I think that all of us when we open a book written by someone we know and of whom we are fond, fear that the book will not mirror his personality. Then we are faced with a horrid alternative,—either we must lie, which as Kim sagely remarked is a bad thing to do unthriftily, or we must hurt the feelings of a friend. In this case this fear has been thoroughly unjustified.

The book for all the world might be Dr. Heiser talking. It gives the reader the delightful feeling that the author is merely sitting across the table from him and talking. Dr. Heiser is one of those rare individuals whom the printed word does not scare into stilted phrases and carefully worded reservations. His descriptions are always vivid, ranging from the tragedy of the Johnstown Flood, where his father and mother were lost and where he, a mere boy, barely escaped with his life, to the closing chapters where he describes a hurried trip from Manila to Tientsin by commandeered automobile, freighter, etc. He has the trick of painting characters too, and he does it rapidly, without the long-winded effort that is only too common—a phrase, an adjective or two, and Manuel Quezon is before you in the flesh.

Again it is not merely characters he paints. He creates a picture of conditions that have long passed and makes that picture live. For example, nothing could give the new stirring within the old so clearly as the description of the baseball game played by the Igorotes in the Philippine Islands.

For forty years he has been journeying. I suppose there is hardly an individual living today who has travelled more than Victor Heiser. From his early manhood he was one of those who was "walking up and down in the world and going to and fro in it." A ship was always sailing out of the bay, cleared for strange ports, with him on board.

What is more, he did not travel pointlessly. So many of those who write books on travel seem to have no objective and their books are like valises plastered with labels. The reader as he puts the volume down feels as William the Silent did when they told him a certain bishop had been wounded at the battle of the Boyne and he remarked, "What was he doing there?"

Victor Heiser is always part of some important undertaking. It may be building the health service in the Philippines. It may be investigating the bubonic plague in Egypt. As a result he meets people, he does things, there is body to his experiences.

He is never, however, over-impressed with his own importance as are many biographers. He does not spend chapters relating some personal sentiment or emotion as if it were an earthshaking occurrence. He has far too keen a sense of humor. Incidentally, this sense of humor gives life and sparkle to the narrative. There is always a twinkle in his eye. His humor is as keen when the joke is on himself as when it is on someone else.

Over and above this, the book gives in impressive fashion a bird's eye view of some of the vast undertakings of that greatest of all philanthropic organizations, the Rockefeller Foundation. The very fact that the undertakings dealt with are not ostensibly arranged to show its ramifications contributes to this.

I liked the entire book. I know that Dr. Heiser's pictures are good for I am familiar with many of the subjects they cover. He is a serious man of high attainments, but he has a splendid sense of humor and a tolerant kindness. This is a book that I think anyone would enjoy. As editor of a publishing house I wish that we had issued it.

Theodore Roosevelt, former Governor General of the Philippines, is now connected with the publishing house of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

South Sea Isles

PACIFIC ADVENTURE. By Willard Price. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1936. $3.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

NEITHER the savage nor Mr. Price had "ever seen the like" of each other at the beginning of this unusual adventure, and they were both amazed, for very few white men have stopped longer than a few hours on any of the 2,550 islands of the Japanese Mandate in the Pacific. Here together are the last relics of the South Sea Isles and the beginnings of a modern dominion.

Mr. Price has deftly blended a tale of travel with a study of social and political significance. The island of Yap is representative of the old conditions. Here the grass skirt still secretes its centipedes and tubercular dampness. Coins of stone twelve feet in diameter are still the medium of exchange, despite the evil which even this money has brought. Sexual promiscuity is encouraged because the race is dying rapidly; forty percent of the women are sterile, and half the others unable to furnish milk for their babies. Not only may no man even borrow a coconut from his brother's acre; he may not eat soup from the same pot, so stringent are the taboos upon this exhausted land.

Yet Japan is systematically converting the many islands of her mandate into an economically profitable and belligerently valuable water empire. By intensive colonization—there are 52,000 Japanese already settled—she is insuring that the islands will remain, at least virtually, always hers, regardless of the will of the League of Nations. Quite definitely, says Mr. Price, there are no fortifications among them now, for he was permitted free access to all parts suspect and has the assurance of it from our own missionaries and traders who have long been resident there. The fantastic fortification rumor has grown in two ways, through a whispering campaign on the part of certain Japanese colonials who would frighten the natives into loyalty, and through official reluctance to permit foreigners to examine areas which are

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potentially fortifiable, innocent though they may be at present.

Japan is making a good job of education, of agriculture, of civilization generally in the islands, but of these laudable purposes she is building what will be her most destructive weapon in the event of trans-Pacific war.

Mr. Price's book is as delightful in style as it is, apparently, clear in vision, and its fifty photographs are excellent.

Hassoldt Davis is the author of "Islands Under the Wind" and "Black Democracy: The Story of Haiti."

Fear of the Chase

I AM THE FOX. By Winifred Van Etten. Boston: Little, Brown & Company (Atlantic Monthly Press). 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE *Atlantic Monthly's* $10,000 prize goes this year to a first novel which is not only a very creditable piece of writing but good reading, even though it hardly holds up to its first promise. Selma Temple, who had given up teaching school in Iowa to become a secretary in New York, was on the verge of marrying her employer, a gentleman whose success had begotten a hard assurance, when they happened to see a fox hunted down to death. Gardner Heath saw only the excitement of the sport; but Selma saw the fox caught and killed just short of safety, and felt suddenly that she was the fox, pursued by Life and by Gardner Heath who at the moment embodied most of the life that interested her, to the inevitable end of extinction, first of individuality and at last of life itself.

Gardner, either a normal human being or a rather smugly callous one, according to your point of view, naturally argued with her; and each turn of their argument recalled some experience in her past that had helped build up in her the fear of life, and a distaste for its phenomena such as most of us might feel if we let our minds dwell on the matter. Certainly Selma was morbidly sensitive; one of her friends once told her, "You inspect your emotions too much. I recommend that for a time you greet events with the remark, 'What the hell?'" But she never seems to have succeeded in applying that motto to anybody but a philandering married man who did not interest her anyway. At the end, what is politely known as the call of the blood gets her, but the reader is left with the prospect that this badly mismated couple is likely to contribute only another depressing case history such as those that had made Selma afraid.

WINIFRED VAN ETTEN

So far so good; but of the chapters that explain the building up of her hesitancy, about half seem to have been originally short stories that stood alone. All but one of them have been woven into Selma's experience, but they hardly add up to the total given in the answer in the back of the book. The first three and one or two of the others are factors such as might have gone into the building of a character like Selma's; but the others, good enough reading in themselves, hardly fit; and the best of the lot, "Saga of the Bible Belt," a picture of tenant farmers in Iowa, seems logically as if it should have had quite the opposite effect. This sort of economy of materials does not help the structure. There remains the discovery of Mrs. Van Etten, who has a keen sensitivity, a sharply discerning eye, and a disciplined and economical style. She is likely to give us better novels.

A Woman of the Pioneer Stripe

A CLOAK OF MONKEY FUR. By Julian Duguid. New York: Appleton-Century Company. 1936. $2.50.

THE author of "Green Hell" makes a debut as a novelist which is not only successful in itself (despite the unpromising title) but a forecast of better things to come. "A Cloak of Monkey Fur" consists of three loosely connected episodes—a dinner at Sebastian Cabot's house in Seville in 1534, the first disastrous settlement of Buenos Aires in the following year, and a struggle for control of the newly-founded colony of Paraguay eight years later; but any shortage in plot interest is more than compensated by the book's other qualities.

That Mr. Duguid can evoke atmosphere —set you down in a strange place and make you feel you are there—was known already; but here he does considerably more than that. Take the prologue—the conference of an elderly and famous navigator, itching to go back to the scenes of his early exploits but condemned by his very distinction to a desk job, with a group of captains, younger and less experienced, who are doing the things he would like to do. Nothing happens but some shop talk, but into those fourteen pages Mr. Duguid has packed a good deal of human nature and has implied some pertinent comments on the lot of man.

JULIAN DUGUID

So with the later scenes, loosely strung about the history of the Basque woman Maria Uzcudun who went to South America as nurse for a noblewoman's child, stayed as a wife and mother, and finally went home with no trophies except her family and the cloak of monkey fur which for her was the symbol of adventure in strange lands. Mr. Duguid has peopled these chapters with living human beings—even the most lightly sketched is real; and (a more difficult achievement for a beginning novelist) those with whom he has taken more pains are real too. Fray Antonio, for instance, true man of God who in moments of crisis tends to forget that he is a Dominican, and to remember that he comes of a family of great noblemen used to the sword; or Don Carlos Oquendo, patient, dogged, uninspired; or the sailor tamed by marriage to Maria.

But the best of the lot is Maria herself —not exactly a pioneer woman, though she did an excellent job of pioneering. In an age when most of Spain was drawn overseas by the mad thirst for gold all Maria wanted was to see what was there, to bring back to the hard-working dulness of her home town an exotic cloak of monkey fur. In the strict sense she was an adventuress; yet in whatever situation she found herself she managed to get along by the exercise of a hard peasant common sense. There were plenty of women like that in the flatboats that went down the Ohio, in the covered wagons that crossed the plains; no doubt they could have been found in the wagons of the Goths too, and of the Achaeans. We owe thanks to Mr. Duguid for his portrait.

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The Wheel Comes Full Circle

AMERICAN ACRES. By Louise Redfield Peattie. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILSON FOLLETT

THIS novel by the author of "Wife to Caliban"—a novel deeply moving in some ways which I shall faintly suggest if I can—falls into three nearly equal divisions, contrasted in mood and key and tempo somewhat as the movements of a symphony. Mrs. Peattie's first hundred pages, which tell the story of a childhood in the country, make an American idyll of the utmost exquisiteness. Her second hundred, by comparison a jangling scherzo, depict a rootless cosmopolitanism which is a disaster to whatever healthy American thing it touches. Her third hundred recapitulate the themes of the first, but in distorted, reminiscent, fragmentary shapes like reflections in ruffled water, and what they have to tell is a story, as true as it is disheartening, of American decay.

I can think of no way to do justice to the grave, quiet beauty of the first part except to say that it has the singular property of making a certain kind of reader homesick for a place where he was never at home, in a region which he perhaps never saw. These opening chapters are surcharged with a magic of pure contentment, the wondering contentment of childhood in its supremely perfect passages. There is a sheen upon the pages like that of the loveliest episodes of Loti's "Histoire d'un enfant." What follows is what has to follow, given the elements assembled—a sequel of petty cruelty and tawdry disillusionment, a more unsparing version of "What Maisie Knew." From that we come, again because we must, to the somber elegiac strain of "The Deserted Village." It is true to the end, and as a structure it has the beauty of inevitability. But it is the first part which leaves you glad and grateful and marveling, on the principle of Masefield's sonnet, that "The days that make us happy make us wise." Here is, for once, that all but impossible achievement of imaginative writing, a sustained, absorbing, fully real presentation of conscious happiness.

The pitifully transient happiness is that of six-year-old Amie of the Grand Portage Honeywells, born abroad early in the war of an impetuous young American fire eater and the pretty, shallow expatriate whom he left a widow in a few years. In a mysterious and reticent way of her own, little Amie was all Illinois Honeywell. And when at last her mother took her to America she drank up all the meanings of her American provincial heritage as dry moss takes up water.

The Honeywells, prosperous farmers who believed in continuity and had it, were a gregarious and open-hearted clan, strong in all the characteristic values of a wise provincialism. Amie, at six, understood for the first time that she was cherished, believed in her security, knew that she had come to heaven. When her second cousin Gregory came home from school the note of her assurance deepened. These two were permanently important to each other, and both knew it.

Alas, Amie's mother could not bear the realization that the Honeywells were not going to fawn upon her. In a culminating fit of pique she tore the child away from Grand Portage by a lying subterfuge. Presently Amie realized with awful horror and fright that she was on a steamer swinging away from the land that held and meant, for her, everything. The next roof over her head was that of a silly Riviera bandbox: her mother occupied it as the mistress of an American business man whose affairs took him often abroad. It was years before the Honeywells even knew where Amie was.

But Amie had Grand Portage with her, she had Gregory Honeywell with her, in all the decade of transient tawdriness that followed. The moment circumstances made it possible to leave her mother without desertion she was on her way to America, Illinois, and home. Once more the Honeywells opened their arms to her. But things had changed almost unbearably. The Grand Portage which Amie had known was being improved and expanded out of existence. Above all, Gregory, home on a visit, had just made a marriage, which Amie saw very soon had not a chance to get through the rapids right side up. The Honeywell in her tore her away as ruthlessly as her mother had done when she was six. It sent her back to Paris to be a combination of lady's-maid and mother to her spoiled, childish mother, now the wife of a gross Argentinian with greasy-haired, obscene-minded grown daughters.

The time came, of course, when once more, for the last time, the girl suffered herself to be packed off to America. When, unheralded, she got to Grand Portage she found the driveway waist-high in weeds, the great mansion boarded up, the new racing stables burned flat, the Honeywells uprooted and dispersed by death and financial loss and change. Of all that a century of American energy and faith had wrought in that place there was nothing left but doddering great-uncle Theron camping out in the log cabin which great-great-grandfather Adoniram had put up in a stand of burr oaks when he settled on these American acres a century ago. Amie camped there with Uncle Theron; she had nowhere else in the world to go. To her, in the end, came Gregory; it was patent from the beginning that his marriage was not to last. The wheel has come full-circle, then; the two must start the Honeywells over again where Adoniram and his young bride started them in the beginning. Amie has the courage, the womanhood for that: has Gregory the manhood left?

Mrs. Peattie has as strong and sane a perception as anyone alive of what makes the good life, what are the permanent values, what things are worth the dedication of heart and mind and will. The tradition, the civilization, she portrays is both actual and beautiful; but I think she has made very little concession to the cause of helping those who are alien to it see its beauty or feel its actuality. They will look at it with a cold appraising eye and then they will say what Gregory's alien wife said about the Honeywell mansion, which was altogether too fine a thing for her understanding: "We'll tear out all the suffocating past and make a grand new going thing of it."

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

INNESS PAINTING USED AS JACKET DESIGN FOR "AMERICAN ACRES"

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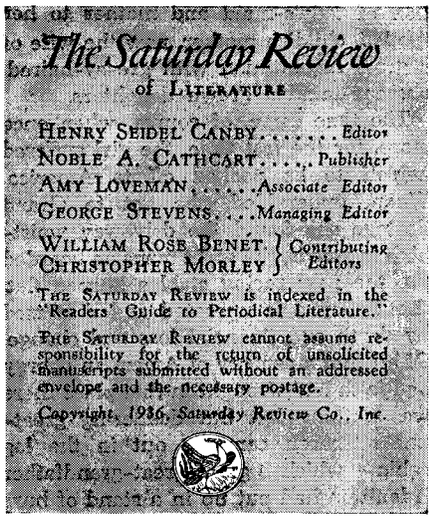
The Saturday Review
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Ready Poetry

POETRY is the tutor of the prose writer and the teacher of all good readers. It is to be doubted whether anyone can write the best prose who does not, or cannot, read poetry. It is to be doubted whether anyone learns to read in the true sense of reading, unless he learns to read poetry.

In the days of the youth of the middle-aged of today, all children heard much poetry read, and were taught (often with much sweat and pains) to recite it. The inoculation too often did not take. Perhaps because much of what was so painfully crammed from "readers" was not very good poetry. Perhaps because childhood is too immature for all but the simplest of real poetry. The child can get a sense of rhythm from his poetry, which is indeed invaluable and may mark the difference later between the reader who reads verse as verse, and he who turns all metre into bad prose. The child can get the habit of reading poetry easily, which also is useful, since it is painful to note how many adults skip every quotation in verse and every interpolated poem in the page of prose which they are perusing. But it is impossible to get much out of real poetry without putting much experience into it, and a child has not had enough experience to get full dividends from his poetry reading.

An essential discipline for the reading of poetry is such as a distinguished scholar of the nineteenth century gave to his pupils. He raved and roared at his classes until they knew, not just what the poet said, but just what he meant. They did not like his methods, but many of them approved of the results. For after they had been hauled up and down a passage of Shakespeare until it was obvious that they had only thought they knew what the words they had been reading really meant, they went off on their own and began to read great poetry with respect. They saw that Milton had put as much into a sonnet as lesser writers had put into a chapter of prose. They saw that a brief passage of Wordsworth—

> No motion has she now, no force;
> She neither hears nor sees;
> Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
> With rocks and stones and trees—

they saw that if they stopped to think it out, to feel it with their whole beings, more questions were raised than could be answered in a day. They saw that in two lines of the youthful Poe—

> To the glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome—

was a glamour of suggestion like the patina of an old statue or the effect of composition in a great picture, that touched the mind with a subtle electricity.

And they became readers of poetry, not very scholarly, not very constant—for some years they seemed to need more than in others—and yet they knew they could not do without it, and would always slip to lower levels if they kept their reading too long to plain prose and prose alone.

And the prose writer soon sees that it is only in poetry, or in prose that is really poetry, that the word—the building block of literature—is perfectly and finally used. It is only in poetry that everything is got out of a word—its meaning, its suggestions, the effects of its sound, its rhythmic relations with the heart-beat, and with the spin of the earth and the pull of the tides.

And it is only in good poetry that the reader really tests himself—is challenged to get all or next to nothing. Straight business-like prose can be read with a sixty percent efficiency. A good reader of prose can skip a quarter of a book, and still pass an examination on its contents. Not so with real poetry. Let a word go by, even sometimes a "the" or an "a," and you have lost the key. Change a curve in a fine picture or statue and you have marred it. So it is with poetry. And that is why poetry reading is the finest mental discipline and, for a mature mind, one of the greatest delights possible.

It is not important how much poetry is read. It is vitally important how it is read and what kind of poetry it is. It is not important whether it is old poetry or new poetry, if it is good poetry. Yet the reader of poetry should certainly read in the poetry of his own time. Superior or inferior, easy or difficult, it is the only poetry written for him, as a member of his own generation. And since much new poetry in this sophisticated age is difficult, such reading will usefully challenge his comprehension. Nor has anyone told the reader of current poetry that he must like it because it is Shakespeare or Shelley, nor has any textbook told him in advance what to think and feel as he reads.

The chief prescription is: Read poetry; form your own taste; lift yourself to the level of good poetry, and stay there as long and as often as you can.

A Portable Bookshelf There has recently appeared in the market a travelling bookshelf for all the world like a suitcase in appearance, but capable of opening up in such fashion that a row of favorite volumes can be established in hotel room or cabin at a moment's notice. Here is equipment in neat array for the sojourner on a desert island or luxurious variety for the bedside reader, a book for any mood. So great a convenience ought to be good for the publishing trade, for how many a well-intentioned traveller has left behind him, or denied himself the purchase of, volumes he has long meant to read because at the moment of his departure a bulging suitcase or trunk refused to harbor his books. Now, he can fit his history, or novel, or biography into a space that will house six other volumes as well, and go off serene in the knowledge that he has not had to sacrifice boots to books or books to boots. It has always seemed to us that publishers have missed a trick in not forming an alliance with architects, and seeing that each new home that goes up contains its built-in bookcases as surely as it does its closets. Gaping shelves would get short shrift from interior decorators, professional or domestic, and every householder would perforce buy books as he buys coverings for his floors. There is, of course, that incomprehensible individual who buys a pasteboard simulacrum to fill empty book-cases. But his number fortunately is small, and since there cannot be a wide range of imitation volumes from which to choose, his false front must soon betray him. Empty shelves would always mean a challenge to the booksellers.

Ten Years Ago

The Saturday Review for August 28th, 1926, contained a review by Joseph Wood Krutch of Elizabeth Madox Roberts's first novel, "The Time of Man," in which Mr. Krutch compared her work to that of Ladislas Reymont, saying that she had *"done for the small farmers of Kentucky"* what the Nobel Prize Winner had done *"for the peasants of his native Poland."* *"'Poetic,'"* he continued, *"is an adjective which one hesitates to apply to a piece of fiction. It is likely to be misunderstood, to suggest the feeble, expansive sentiment which seems to pass with many for poetry. But it is the only word which will serve to characterize either the form or the effect of Miss Roberts's novel."*

Today

Miss Roberts's present position as a novelist needs no comment. "The Time of Man" is now published in the Modern Library as well as in the regular trade edition. She is at present at work on a new book, the publication date of which is still indefinite.

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Letters to the Editor: *Political Prejudice and Reviewing* *A Mistaken Citation*

The Fault Is in Ourselves

SIR:—As upwards of four years have elapsed since either a review or a letter expressive of my personal opinions have appeared in your august columns, may I be forgiven the surrender of ten minutes of my invaluable time to join the throng of controversialists who were recently debating your problem of political prejudice in current book reviewing. I wish to speak for both the reviewer and the reader.

The fault, dear Brutus, is in ourselves: each reviewer and every reader tending to feel personally responsible for the education of this highly touted generation. Most of us are born reformers, especially if we boast Teutonic or Slavic blood. Frankly, I suspect that the reading public prefers to judge for itself; and especially since the days of "popular collegiate education for all," most of it is about as competent as is the average "omniscient reviewer."

There is a difficulty, however, in expressing the gist of our dissatisfaction, and here I refer, perforce, to those of us who do not wish to have the half-baked opinions of others poured down our throats. The skilful author knows how to set his emotional scene and play upon emotions without letting the reader know too obviously that the cards are stacked against him. But the reviewer is cramped for space (by reason of mechanical and other arbitrary editorial fixations—mainly commercial) and frequently, therefore, either gives himself away, or gives a false impression by reason of inadequate facilities for the complete rounding of his thought. The reader feels the lack at once, as a school boy feels the attitude of his teacher, but doesn't quite understand the process, never yet having been faced with the necessity of "telling all" about a book in "not more than 600 words, if you please."

Thus, the outraged reader will sometimes write to register his disaffection, calling his impression of a review by such words as prejudice, bias, personal opinion, etc., which may be very true. Often the reader has not read the book, or even if he has is in no position to judge the omissions of certain facts and premises or even the false logic employed by an author in insinuating certain conclusions; and often the reviewer is forced to substitute one or two vague generalizations for what would otherwise require a thousand words of explanation. Hence, the most common form of discontent arises. This does not apply, of course, to the more obviously biased reviews, which do not, I should judge, characterize more than eighty-five percent of the present metropolitan output: a fair average considering the intellectual anarchy which seems everywhere to prevail.

Another difficulty lies in our propensity to search for "rules of life." What are the paraphernalia of philosophies and isms but the means of enabling man's senses to retain their favorite illusions?

A thing is just or unjust only according to the arguments of men. When questions of abstract right are concerned, what man can be sure that the judgment of God must necessarily conform to his own empirical view of justice? At best his own view of justice, now-a-days, seems to have a reach of about twenty years—since the war, let us say. And views, like books, leave us chiefly with bitter superiority and proud sadness.

As for political views, the liberals (or radicals, for I make no distinction) have based their illusions upon emotional responses common to nearly all men, and they obtain responses from those who are emotional. The conservatives base theirs, as a rule, upon an appeal to reason or education uncommon to most men, and, as a rule, they are not popular: though I should not go so far as to say that most of the good writers of all time have been liberals.

The whole thing seems to me to revolve around a slavery to words, to which, as Anatole France observed, "men submit themselves with much docility." Lacking an adequate succession of ideas, we attempt to evolve formulae out of ignorance; and like a child with a new word, a doctor with a new prescription, or a scientist with a new invention, we often overestimate their value and utility. In this respect the half-baked intellectual or the scholar who has spent ten years on a single aspect of a single theme is just as guilty as the cheap journalist or the politician who "springs a new one," or picks up the latest panacea and makes it his own on the strength of three emotions and one new hook-up of two irrelevant words. After all, what does it matter whether a reviewer is a conservative or a liberal: often the most noble sentiment lurks in the vaguest of our ideas! Your extreme radical and your ultra conservative are in more intimate accord than most of their friends realize. What they both need is a sense of balance.

LLOYD W. ESHLEMAN.

New York.

"THEY TELL ME LANDON DOESN'T LIKE POETRY."

Anent "Punk"

SIR:—The interesting discussion in a recent Trade Winds column anent the word "punk" contained an inaccurate reference. If Magistrate Rudich "went home and reread "Measure for Measure" he would not find the word in question "amusingly defined" in Act 1, Scene 5, but in Act 5, Scene 1. However, thanks to Quercus, I reread the play and for that I am gratefully yours,

A. WILSON.

New York.

"Irregardless Again"

SIR:—Much as I hate to disagree with my editorial apologists in *The Saturday Review* I doubt that Ring Lardner ever used "irregardless." My authority for that word, although I am told that like "erl" and "erster" it is a commonplace in Brooklyn, is the late Joe Humphries, New York prize-fight announcer extraordinary for many years. His influence still lingers at the Garden, as the other night the present announcer used for the first—and perhaps the last—time, the magnificent word "prejudism," referring to the racial differences of Messrs. Schmeling and Louis.

THE CRIMINAL RECORD.

New York.

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Ten Thousand Proverbs

BY WALLACE NOTESTEIN

WHEN I show my collection of ten thousand proverbs* to friends who drop in they at once begin turning over the pages and cease to be conversational assets. The only thing left to do is to pull out the second edition of John Ray's "Collection of Proverbs" (1678), suggest that there are racier proverbs in that book, and regain surreptitiously the Oxford volume. It is of course a book to be dipped into rather than read, yet one who has read it through more than twice finds the task less than a burden.

The historical notes to the proverbs, listing the early uses, afford constant surprise. What a lot of the proverbs are first to be found in the works of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Thomas Fuller, Swift, and Sir Walter Scott. What a lot of them go back to French, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch sources. It is John Ray's volume even more than this new one that gives the continental background of many proverbs, and it is Ray that offers Latin and Greek origins. Proverbs are as interesting in their history as parish churches or words. It is seldom of course that we can get back to the man who made the proverb, though some of the sayings of Shakespeare and of Thomas Fuller have become proverbs. Among all Englishmen only one, I think, can be credited with a lot of proverbs which were of his own making, and that is Thomas Tusser who in the sixteenth century published his rhymed couplets of advice to farmers. Those couplets were easy to remember and were quoted by farmers from that time on.

It is not only the history of proverbs that is interesting but proverbs as a reflection of history. "A black sheep is a biting beast" has to do with the enclosing of land that created wide pastures where villages had been. The couplet, "Portman, Horner, Popham and Thynne, when the monks went out they came in" is a Somerset version of a common story of the rise of families in the sixteenth century. "To turn an abbey into a grange" is another comment upon the spoiling of the shaven men. The proverb goes as far back as Skelton, but the story itself is still to be seen, written in the stone of gothic farmhouses that were once country houses and before that abbeys, and of farm buildings behind where a bull may look out from an oriel window. "I'll make him water his horse at Highgate," *i.e.*, I will sue him and he will have to go to London, is an idiom that brings up Star Chamber and Chancery and the long quarrels of county families. "A knight of Cales (Cadiz), and a gentleman of Wales, and a laird of the north countree, a yeoman of Kent with his penny rent can buy them out all three" is a rhyme that places itself naturally in late Elizabeth. "When Oxford draws knife, England's soon at strife" makes us think of Laud and the Civil Wars but may go back earlier. "What will Mrs. Grundy say" belongs in the late eighteenth century when men were concerned to be genteel. "What Lancashire thinks today all England will think tomorrow" brings up the Manchester School and Free Trade. No less pertinent to the nineteenth century and the twentieth is "the eleventh commandment, thou shalt not be found out."

English history is in proverbs, but precious little about English classes. True, there is a certain amount about masters and servants, but not about squires, parsons, yeomen, husbandmen, and cotters and their relations with one another. Were those relations so well understood that they did not leave the hurt that made common people talk about them? "It is comparison that makes us miserable" said a proverb, and the lower classes accepted their lot too naturally to make comparisons. They and their betters still believed in order and degrees as set forth by the parson and by the poet. "Honor (gentility) is but ancient riches" said one who had considered the matter more deeply than most. Often the community must have had its teeth set on edge at sight of the parson riding round the parish to claim his tithes, but there is no proverb in the Oxford book on the subject save "good tithers, good thrivers," *i.e.*, the farmer who pays his tithe to the parson will thrive, a rhyme perhaps invented with reason. Nor is there a single proverb that I can recall about relations between the yeoman and the squire, and they did not always lie down together in peace. Nor are there proverbs about the well-to-do yeoman who listened to the herald and assumed a coat of arms, nor about climbing the class ladder. Some proverb-maker did declare: "There are three ways, the church, the sea, the court" ("the university" was added in some versions), but that proverb is unusual. Becoming a gentleman or getting on in the professions, in politics or the court, these were not mentioned as forms of success; success was accumulating money. Perhaps even the yeoman knew that to money all things would be added.

Some of the proverbs with local attachments are interesting. "He is Yorkshire" means that he is a sharp fellow. "To come Yorkshire over one" means of course to overreach one. "Shake a bridle over a Yorkshireman's grave and he will rise and steal a horse" suggests a fondness for horses that was not unnatural in men who had to get over the moors. "Essex stiles, Kentish miles, Norfolk wiles many a man beguiles" is most relevant about Norfolk whose inhabitants had somewhat the same reputation as Yorkshiremen. "I'm Sussex and I wun (won't) be druv" might be applied to men of other conservative counties and was used also of Berkshire, I think. "As sure as God's in Gloucester" once implied possibly a divine preference for a county filled with abbeys, but there are mortals who for other reasons would aver the same preference today. "It's as long in coming as Cotswold barley" reflects a sixteenth century attitude towards the bleak uplands. "The devil will not come into Cornwall for fear of being made into a pie" sets the duchy in no unfavorable light. There are several proverbs about the change in the status of towns, but we shall quote only one: "Kirton (Crediton) was a borough town when Exon (Exeter) was a vuzzy down." There are many variations of this country moralizing upon historical processes. Local sayings, too, are applied with like words to different places. "When Bredon Hill puts on his hat, we men of the vale beware of that" is a couplet about the threat of rain that is applied with variant readings to a score of hilltops. One of the most delightful of local proverbs comes out of

A LION MAY BE BEHOLDEN TO A MOUSE, RUNS THE PROVERB.

* *THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH PROVERBS. Compiled by William George Smith. New York: The Oxford University Press.* 1936. $6.50.

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Fuller's "Worthies." "Blessed is the eye that is betwixt Severn and Wye." From the wide ridge between those two rivers the walker has far views, but the delectation of the eye with distance was a pleasure few sought and fewer mentioned before the middle of the eighteenth century.

One is impressed in the proverbs with the harsh attitude towards women. Want of chastity was a subject upon which it was easy to frame utterances that had some quality of remembrance in them. But the proverbs complain that women were scolds, that they talked too much, that they spent their husband's money, and in frivolities. Indeed the proverbs are medieval in their attitude, and that is not surprising for no doubt many of them went back to medieval times, and those that did not were of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was James I in the latter century who quoted the phrase that "women were a necessary evil." The saying "He that would tell his wife news is but newly married," *i.e.*, a man should not talk over his affairs with his wife, is as seventeenth century in spirit as it can be." "Women, priests, and poultry never have enough" or "A woman, a spaniel, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be" must both go far back. The virtues of women, their sympathy, their affection and self-sacrifice the proverb-makers are almost silent about. We do find the proverb: "In the man wisdom, in the woman gentleness." "My cat is a good mousehunt," *i.e.*, my wife is diligent, is good seventeenth century and is to be found not in the Oxford book but in Smyth of Nibley. It was diligence and housewifely skill that deserved praise.

If the proverbs about women and hundreds of others seem to us foolish and even materialistic, there are now and then proverbs that deal with matters of the spirit: "If it were not for hope the heart would break"; "Between the business of life and the day of death a space ought to be interposed"; "Think with the wise but talk with the vulgar"; "The wind in one's face makes one wise"; "Without danger we cannot get beyond danger." All these are in the Oxford book.

Some of the proverbs just mentioned sound as if they might be of a recent mint. Save for the last one, which we cannot date but which is probably old, all of them go back at least as far as the seventeenth century, and some much farther. A study of the proverbs in this book leaves one with the suspicion that few of the good proverbs in it have been coined since the middle of the eighteenth century. Phrases and idioms there are a-plenty, but "thrifty hobnail proverbs" such as the plain country fellow used "to clout his discourse" were either not being made or have not found their way as yet into print. We may well ask why. Has the mass of newspapers and books made oral wisdom less memorable? Has the diffusion of education made the common people esteem less lightly their own speech and country wisdom? Has the city in its complexity that calls for subtle speech made the lore of villages less useful? It would seem so. London, which drew its strength from the country has proved at length too strong for the country. Sir Edward Coke made his appeals to the Commons of the sixteen-twenties in words that were crowded with country sayings. He urged members to put the saddle on the right horse, and they all understood that, and so did Tom the carter. The squires who came up to Westminster in the seventeenth century, those squires whom Coke addressed, had only last August been helping with the hay at home, and spoke with the same accent and idiom as the men of the fields. It was not so of William Pitt who quoted Virgil to make his point, nor of the statesmen of the nineteenth century who, like other men of their class, spoke a new English that was removed from the speech of the shires, and used their own epigrams rather than hobnail proverbs. Not only members of parliament today but the men who write books and edit papers speak a tongue that has little to do with the speech of St. Nicholas Sydling or Stow-on-the-Wold. Mary Webb may pack her Shropshire pages with proverbs or a writer of recollections repeat curiously words he heard a shepherd utter. But that is all out of a remote world. If the proverbs are still being made in that world they have not the chance they once had to become coin of the realm.

THE FOX MAY GROW GRAY, BUT NEVER GOOD

If the city has pushed the country into the background, indeed into a far land, the country has often taken its color from the city, has lost its own unique flavor, has obscured those reflective individuals who might make pithy comment on what they see around them. I was once inquiring of a Northumbrian parson right under the Cheviots about the border farmers, prepared to hear of unspoiled hardy northerners like their forebears who had fought with Percy against the Douglas at Otterburn. He assured me that his parishioners and all the folk up the dale were interested in nothing but bridge drives and the cinema.

It is quite possible that they would quote Hollywood idiom and American slang. And that slang and English slang are another part of the story of the decline of proverbs. They have taken on a different form and we esteem them less because they are more familiar and have not the old ring. George Ade and Mr. Dooley, Will Rogers and William Allen White and their kin have given us in America the modern equivalent of proverbs. In the comparison of these modern equivalents and the old proverbs there would be, I think, some philosophy, but space forbids the pursuit of it. This must be added, however, that occasionally our slang is closer than we would guess to the proverb. We say colloquially: "It's a great world if you don't weaken." The Oxford Dictionary gives (1721): "It's a good world if it hold." John Chamberlain, writing to a friend in 1616 (I am writing from memory, for the exact date and the words are in manuscript), said: "It's a great world if you can stick it."

There is much else one would like to say. This collection will set us all thinking about proverbs. It has been carefully gathered from all the old collections and compendiums. If the editors overlooked Smyth of Nibley and his "History of the Hundred of Berkeley" in which he recorded many Gloucestershire proverbs, they have not overlooked other such collections. They have skimmed the plays and other literary works of the old time and some of the novels of more modern times; they have even used the *Literary Supplement* of the London *Times*. We must not ask too much of them, but it would have been well to have gone through non-literary sources, the speeches of members of parliament, the year books with their old law cases and sayings, the political tracts which are often alive with proverbs. Everyone interested in proverbs should write in at the top and bottom of the pages of his copy the proverbs he meets with in his reading and send them on to a Proverb Society, which should be established. Eventually there should be a large five-volume dictionary. Meanwhile we have this best of all English collections and its excellent index which with very little show of analysis has managed to make it possible, with a subject or verbal clue, to find almost any proverb in the book.

Wallace Notestein, who is professor of history at Yale University, has made the study of proverbs one of his literary diversions for many years.

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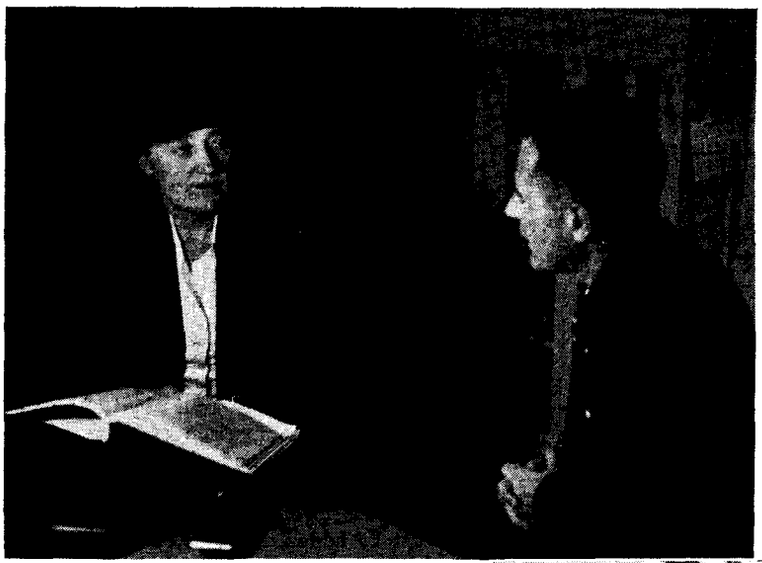
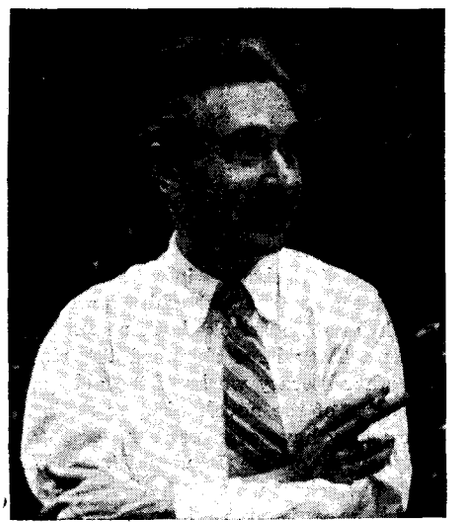
Dialogues and Travelogues

News Pictures of the Month by Robert Disraeli



Mary Ellen Chase (above), author of "Silas Crockett" one of last year's best-sellers, discusses her recent trip to Europe with her publisher, George Brett, Jr., of Macmillan at his office in New York.

Henry Alsberg (above), Federal Writers' Project head, looks over the manuscript of the New York State guide book, one of a forthcoming series for all parts of the country, at his office in Washington, D. C.



Literary fare! (Above) Collecting four books per person from passengers boarding the S. S. State of Delaware on July 29th. This novel day-time excursion up Long Island Sound was organized for the benefit of the Conrad Memorial Library of the Seamen's Church Institute. (At left) Marvin Lowenthal, author of "The Jews of Germany" which was published by Longmans, Green in June.

A Hamilton Gibbs (above), whose novel, "The Need We Have," was reviewed last week, with his wife on a visit to Manhattan. (Right) Two Little, Brown authors, Dr. St. Martin ("Madame Toussaint's Wedding Day"), in the white coat, and Theodore Pratt whose "Big Blow" is coming soon.

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Posthumous Clarence Day

AFTER ALL. By Clarence Day. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE late Clarence Day, at the time of his death, had endeared himself to many. All knew the story of his courage, the conquest of his shrewd, brave spirit over physical ills. No man was surely more profoundly disillusioned than he concerning human nature, yet there was something about his most biting drawings and verses that "took the curse off" his attitude. These two media, and the third, of his prose, he used delightedly though incisively. His "Life with Father" swelled into an enormous sale which gave him a genuine and great surprise. It is now being translated into Swedish and into German. Fifteen years ago, Day had published his "The Crow's Nest," a collection of essays, verses, and drawings. This, before his death, he set about completely revising, excluding some contributions and adding twenty-eight that have never appeared before in book form. His publisher now brings out this book almost exactly as it was planned by Day. "This Simian World" and "Thoughts Without Words," by Day, will also be recalled by the world he so well entertained. It is evidence of a nation's relish for wit and satire at their best that in the United States alone almost three hundred thousand copies of Clarence Day's books have been sold.

Katharine B. Day contributes a note to open the present volume, a note that follows a Valentine, by way of dedication, that is addressed to her, with an inimitable drawing. Both Valentine and note are in the spirit of the book. They are frank and very human.

The first really world-important paper in the book is called "Edible Workers."

> Think of great future factories where interested wolverines work, their eyes shining with happy excitement as they gallop about, pulling levers. Every morning a flock of eager woodpeckers will be seen in the sky, with an aviator herding them up from Navesink to their carpenter-shop work in town.

That is, if we really decide to use our animal-power! I like also, Clarence Day's fondness for Edward Lear. It chimes with my own. He apparently discovered him before T. S. Eliot did, and points out how, in the famous ballad of the Yonghy Bonghy-Bò, Lear actually wrote the sequel to that famous play *before* Ibsen wrote "A Doll's House!" Also, quite naturally, I was interested in Day's struggles with poetry, in which he scores neatly off Browning in that matter of tightening the girths while galloping frantically from Ghent to Aix. Just try tightening the girths when you're a-horseback in full career!

But I don't intend to go through the whole book for you. There are some priceless papers here, ditto verse, and ditto sketches, which last, since the days of Lear himself, and in direct competition with the drawings of the late G. K. C., have a wild abandon all their own. Even Jim Thurber can't get more expression into a human (or is it human?) countenance.

So you may thank your stars there is more Day, and as brilliant a Day as ever. Selah.

All Elbows

MISS LINSEY AND PA. By Stella Gibbons. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

ONCE upon a time, Miss Stella Gibbons went exploring among the plains and jungles of the minor novel, and the result was that piece of pioneer satire, "Cold Comfort Farm." But there is much danger in this kind of exploration: the explorer, for instance, may end by going native. He may become a minor novelist himself. This is what happened to Miss Gibbons—the intrepid and ruthless satirist went back to live among her former victims, producing "Bassett," "Enbury Heath," and now "Miss Linsey and Pa."

Miss Linsey and her pa, having bankrupted their country shop, make tracks for London, where Miss Linsey goes to work. First she works for a lady novelist and her too possessive friend, and helps the lady novelist escape into marriage with a doctor. And then she is employed by a married pair of advanced habits, and helps their little girl to become human. And then she encourages her cousin to marry a Frenchwoman he loved in the war. And then . . . But you can see for yourself that the plot is an old acquaintance, somewhat down at heels. It ought to be talkative, that was its chief merit when it was fresh: the unrelated groups, the casual disappearances of leading characters, all point to a leisurely novel. But the novel is far from leisurely; it is almost terse. It reads like the notebook for a more ambitious opus; and since it has been provided with a sentimental ending, it resembles a notebook bound in pink ribbon.

In Miss Gibbons's case, however, appearances are very deceptive; and when you have finished the book you begin to ask yourself whether she is not rather more than a novelist who writes like a number of other novelists. It begins to dawn on you that she has had something up her sleeve all the time; that she has an individual and instinctive point of view. All but two or three of her people (and those two or three are mere decoration, like pa) have one characteristic in common. Courage, kindliness, dulness, stupidity, intelligence—they display, as one might expect, all these qualities. But they are also all elbows. With a singular unanimity they press forward to their little purposes; though their manners vary, their method is the same. It is the method of the rush hour. Somewhere deep in their souls is a desire to shove. How they shove that dear old spinster, Miss Linsey, around! And how Miss Linsey would have shoved them, if circumstances had been different! I don't suppose that Miss Gibbons intends all this to be a dig at the middle classes, with whom the book is exclusively concerned; I don't suppose that she intends anything; but I rather suspect that she doesn't like most people. In this novel her dislike is limited, because she is trying to be nice. But if she gave vent to it, she might easily write a middle-class satire: and we should not forget *that* nearly so easily as we are going to forget "Miss Linsey and Pa."

In the Kentucky Mountains

MOUNTAIN PATH. By Harriette Simpson. New York: Covici-Friede. 1936. $2.50.

Reviewed by CURRIE CABOT

ITS restrained intensity makes "Mountain Path" a book to remember. It is a story of the Kentucky mountains, but it is not like any other mountain story; it has its own distinct individuality, its own flavor. It is an unusually satisfying book, for it is written in fine, simple prose, it gives an authentic picture of mountain people, and its story, beautifully told, mounts in cumulative drama to a tragic climax.

Miss Simpson makes us aware of her bitter tale of a mountain valley and its feuds through the eyes and finally through the emotions of a young girl from the outside world who goes to teach school in the lonely settlement of Cave Creek. Louisa Sheridan is a thoroughly civilized person, a student of higher mathematics. Her gradual involvement in the anachronistic emotions about her is shown to us subtly and convincingly; the clear discernments of her original detachment give way to understanding, understanding grows into a passionate sharing in the primitive mountain life.

The narrow valley hemmed in by high mountains, the log house lying half the day in shadow, the hardworked women, the men with their hidden stills, are vivid and instant to us, and carry a conviction of sober truth. But the whole groundwork of fact is overlaid with a fascination that proceeds from the quality of Miss Simpson's imagination; certain incidents, touching old chords of mountain superstition, seem to release long vibrations of legend across her pages. The book has stark beauty and sharp impact.

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Scribner Books

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by

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by

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«Scribners»

The Problem of Delinquency

CAN DELINQUENCY BE MEASURED? By Sophia M. Robison. New York: Columbia University Press. 1936. $3.

WAYWARD YOUTH. By August Aichhorn. New York: Viking Press. 1936. $2.75.

Reviewed by ELEANOR R. WEMBRIDGE

HERE are two books on juvenile delinquency; both good, both written by authors of extensive experience, both valuable additions to the literature of the subject, and yet so different in their focus of interest, their method, and their personal, and what one might call atmospheric, background, that nothing that they say overlaps. Mrs. Robison's study is a direct, methodical attack on the question of how any delinquency statistics can be accurate when no unit of delinquency measurement has been agreed upon. Anyone who has dealt with such problems, and has tried to answer the inevitable questions which are always asked as to the extent, the increase, and the cure for juvenile delinquency, knows exactly the confusion to which Mrs. Robison refers.

How, for instance, shall one reckon how many delinquents there are? From court records? No. Because there are identical cases handled by social agencies, which never went to court. Do "areas" of delinquency mean anything? No. Because area figures depend upon the social customs of the residents in those areas. For example, are they the type that file complaints easily, or that do not file at all? In groups where there is a strong tradition of parental authority, they file for unruly behavior that would be accepted as usual in areas where such a tradition is absent. The same is true for sex irregularities; for failure to recognize property rights; for vagrancy; and other behavior —delinquent or not, according to the point of view. Where there is no provision for handling colored cases, they may not be reported for conduct that would mean a filed complaint on a Jewish child, when a good agency existed to handle him. Catholics being traditionally in favor of institutional placement, are likely to file and place in detention delinquents who might not be noticed where appropriate institutions were lacking. Girls are not filed upon as often as boys, because police dislike to interfere with them. In short, the number of cases in a court, or an agency, or an institution, depends largely upon what certain local groups dislike enough to complain about, or have organizations to handle. And behavior such as truancy, which is classed on the books as delinquency, may be considered as the virtue of filial obedience, in groups where parents refuse to allow their children to go to school.

The author summarizes her findings as follows: Legal definitions of delinquency are too unsatisfactory to use as tools of statistical measurement. Until a reliable index of delinquency is found and agreed upon, explanations of real differences, and true measurement will have to wait. There are seventy-five tables and a topical index to bear out Mrs. Robison's conclusions, all set forth in the best de-emotionalized American style.

As far as possible from this, is Aichhorn's good-humored, soft-hearted, account of disorderly juveniles, with their symptoms and treatment described according to the usual Freudian method. Like all of his school the author uses the familiar terms of identification, fixation, sublimation, transference, and all the rest. But a different atmosphere pervades the work from that which one meets in many of these somewhat lugubrious accounts. Herr Aichhorn appears to be a jolly Viennese, free from complexes of his own, which one feels were relieved (if he ever had any) by nature rather than by science. He evidently speaks from a rich clinical experience, and is interested in the individual patient, rather than in statistics of the group. He makes a constant distinction between neurotic delinquents, whose conflicts are primarily within themselves, and the merely anti-social, whose battles are against society. Although he finds the mechanisms of the two similar, he considers that the anti-social type is particularly difficult to treat, because it suffers no inner torment, and therefore sees no reason for being treated. He amiably accepts the fact that most delinquents are quarrelsome and disorderly, believes that all children have the same tendencies, and believes that children in institutions should have as much, if not more, leeway in the way of rough and tumble, than is allowed in the usual boisterous household. Some of his lively descriptions remind the reviewer of nothing so much as stories of the little Roosevelts roller skating in the White House ballrooms, or our more recent contemporaries the little Abbes, in their domestic squabbles.

The author's contention is that it is safer to break furniture than the law, and that unregulated impulsive life must break something. He stresses the importance of the first meeting with shy and surly children, and suggests that just as an experienced hostess does not begin her conversation with a stranger by pointing out his faults, it is also a poor approach for interviewer. He believes that advisers should be socially responsive; that they should agree with a contrary patient that society is pretty bad before telling him that he is worse; talk about clothes with the vain, joke with the lively; be gentle with the lonely; and never give a scolding when it is expected.

His conclusion apparently is that most normal children overcome their bad habits, not to please themselves, but to please those whom they love. Since delinquents have seldom been blessed with stable family affection, the same mechanism must be used to make them want to please someone else. It sounds hearty, reasonable, and sympathetic. But this reviewer feels that the author's gaiety and gusto, was not manufactured by aid of Freud or anyone else. Like poets, charming people are born not made. The handling of difficult personalities is not a science which can be learned by the tense, the solemn, or the unwholesome, however hard-working or intelligent. When all's said and done—it's a gift!

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—Padraic Colum, N. Y. Sun

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A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks

BY AKSEL SANDEMOSE

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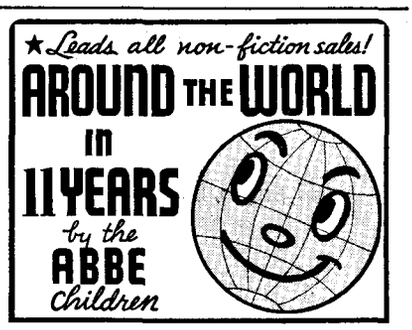

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A Black Picture

FROM THE SOUTH SEAS TO HITLER. By Ivy Carl. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1936. $3.

Reviewed by BARBARA TOLNAI

IF dislike of Hitler and his cohorts were sufficient cause, Ivy Carl's "From the South Seas to Hitler" would be a youthful masterpiece. Barring that, it is an inchoate if sincere protest against a number of things which the author fails to fathom, and which she lumps together under the name of "nationalism" with a promiscuousness only equalled by the Fuehrer's own more famous classifications.

Part of Miss Carl's aversion to Hitlerism might be explained on personal grounds. The daughter of a German spy and an unsuspecting Englishwoman, Miss Carl had lived on four continents before she was ten years old, while her father served sundry masters, often changing his nationality from day to day. One of his missions finally took him back to Germany, and ultimately into the pay of the Nazis as a secret service man in a poison gas plant. Being subsequently assigned to murder refugees in Czechoslovakia, the onetime World War spy and alleged nemesis of Lord Kitchener washed his hands of the job, and fled to Switzerland. His wife and family followed, and in due time nineteen-year-old Ivy settled down to write her memoirs.

Miss Carl is at her best in her portrayal of German youth under the Third Reich:

> I decided it was not fanaticism but craven fear of learning and the future [she writes of the enthusiasm of the young at the pyre of books in Munich]. Like Long Tiel in our class, there lurked here the spy and the informer ready to report the slackers and shirkers to the Party. If in place of Hitler a communist had stood at the helm of State, Hitler's "My Struggle" would have gone up in flames.

She writes of the perverted hero worship, and the widespread sex bribery prevalent in the Nazi youth organizations. (Examinations some time ago are said to have shown that over thirty per-cent of girls between thirteen and fifteen in certain youth groups were pregnant.) She shows the cruel impact of a glorified paganism and racial superiority on its helpless victims, through the suicide of a crippled classmate and a Jewish professor, the exploitation of youth in the Nazi "Arbeitsdienst," the baiting of university careers as traps to catch dissenters, the terrorism of Nazis everywhere.

> There is only one way of tackling men like Hitler and that is the one which is so effective with bad actors—to drive him off the world's stage with rotten eggs. Don't take him seriously! Receive him with jeers and mockery!

Unfortunately the man from Braunau has a faculty for arousing emotions far more dangerous than mirth. As for the eggs, both his training and his practice are likely to have inured Herr Hitler to strong aromas.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 126)

THOMAS B. ALDRICH—
"SEA LONGINGS"

Among the mountains I am ill at ease,
Missing the stretched horizon's level line
And the illimitable restless blue.
. . . . . No bird's lilt
So takes me as the whistling of the gale
Among the shrouds. My cradle song was this.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
ME, DETECTIVE *Leslie T. White* (Harcourt, Brace: $2.50.)	California operative tells factual tale of his adventures with criminals great and small.	Absorbing narrative and about the most depressing account of the politico-criminal combination on record.	Good stuff
TROUBLE AT GLAYE *Mrs. Baillie Reynolds* (Crime Club: $2.)	Two English canoeists stumble into castle where dirty work is brewing and distressful damsel languishes.	Plot wiggles around too much and ending is a welter of something or other but it entertains.	Readable
DEATH SMILES *Russell R. Phillips* (Macaulay: $2.)	Several people perish with grins on their faces. Bill Hanford narrowly escapes similar fate but unearths criminal.	Somewhat leisurely tale is enlivened by helpful society lass and mysterious French maid but pace is pretty slow.	*Vin ordinaire*
THE DOCTOR DIED AT DUSK *Geoffrey Holmes* (Morrow: $2.)	End of Cal. fruit-pickers strike fracas finds medico murdered. Rural roughneck also perishes before R. Bishop finds solution.	Super-abundance of slightly unsavory—and very interesting—small town intrigue befogs plot a bit, but general effect is . . .	Excellent

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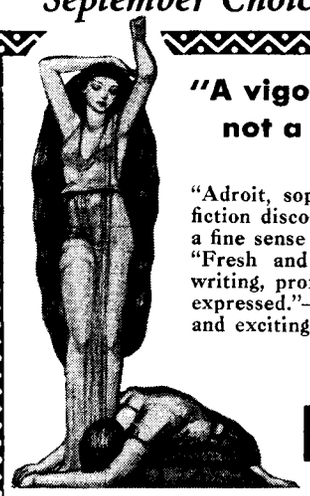

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By M. ESCOTT

I TOLD MY LOVE

In the Shadow of

TOMORROW

By J. HUIZINGA This bold and searching analysis of the cultural temper of our times by the distinguished Professor of History at Leyden University has aroused widespread discussion rivalling that of Ortega's famous "The Revolt of the Masses." Huizinga compares the crises of our times with the great disturbances of other times and indicates what may lie *In the Shadow of Tomorrow.* $2.50

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

TO me a new book by Arthur Davison Ficke is sure to contain sage beauty; nor am I disappointed in this one before me, "The Secret and Other Poems" (Doubleday, Doran. 1936. $1.75). Its title poem is one with which readers of *The Saturday Review of Literature* are already familiar, as it appeared in our pages. It is a long and intimate poem that brought to the author unusual responses from readers all over the country. In a time of manifold confusions it speaks of "a thing wholly within, wholly private and of the lonely spirit; the changes of mere events are not of its world." It is the strangeness of life in relation to ourselves that is, I think, what Mr. Ficke means, though he says

But I do not know my Secret,
And it may be that I shall never discover it.

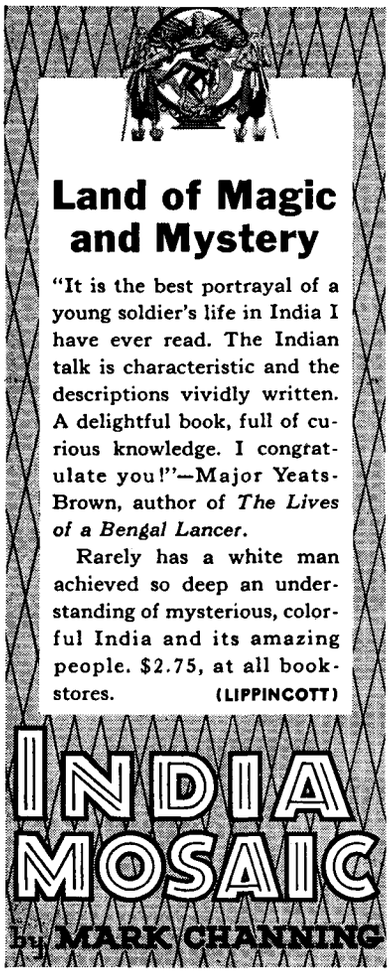
It is the residuum of—I will not use that abused word "mysticism"—but the imponderable and unmaterial within our consciousness, that which gives us pause ever and again in what we feel to be our most firmly established cognition. It is a poem worth pondering.

Section II of the book relates vivid experiences in a hospital, Section III is inspired by the Mexican lake of Chapala, in IV we have poems written among Berkshire solitudes. Ficke's astringent shorter poems directly communicate. He is fully aware of the cruelty of nature as in "Exiled From Eden," and he deals in anything but false optimism, but he has almost seen "in simple roadside flowers a beauty not of wisdom nor of pain"—neither good nor bad but innocent and wild," as another poet has said. His poems of creatures, on the rabbit, on the snake, on the horse, are among his best. In the section titled "Celestial Presences" there are fine things: a most beautiful poem called "The Pool," and some other fine personal tributes. This is a most companionable poet, even as is the actual man. He sees the world moving now, as indeed it is, through a twilight of ignorance and cruelty—a twilight we had thought passed with the Middle Ages—but he has saving memories. And in "Various Phantoms" he can muse not without wry mirth upon such superhuman oddities among men as Dr. John Donne and Busha Grey, the extraordinary Jamaican. Ficke has passed fifty and this is the first book he has published in the last six years. He knows the worth "of laughter and the love of friends," that earth's life is old, and "Vain are the novelties of surprise that we invent"; but his sympathy is also, as ever, with youth and unspoiled love in the young heart. He is a good man to know in these days.

F. P. A. once christened Thomas Augustin Daly, "Daly the Troubadour," an apt title as well as a witty. To "Selected Poems of T. A. Daly" (Harcourt, Brace. $2.50) Christopher Morley writes a "Letter to the Publishers" by way of introduction, in which he says that "One's friends are for love; not for analysis." Morley once inherited "Tom Daly's old rolltop desk in the office of the Philadelphia *Evening Public Ledger*. With that desk," he adds, "perhaps I inherited an inside glimpse of his ardors and endurances . . . Irish by inheritance, poet by nature, there is no drop of commercial fluid in his veins." Daly is chiefly known for his poems in Italian dialect which to hear him recite is an experience you may well covet if you have it not. Less familiar, I think, are his poems in English, of which "To a Thrush" is one of the most touching and beautiful. The contents of this selected volume are linguistically divided, "Ialice," "Hibernice," "A La Francause," "Anglice," and "Songs of the Months" added. You'll find Daly as entertaining in Irish brogue as in Italian dialect, graceful at the French ballade, apt with the aphoristic jape, and when you run across my favorite among many, "Leetla Giuseppina," give that enchanting child my regards!

"O!" she cried to heem, "Formica"
(Dat's Italian name for heem),
"How you gatta here so queecka?
For I know you no can sweem;
An' you was not on da sheepa,
For I deed not see you dere.
How you evva mak' da treepa?
Only birds can fly een air.
How you gat here from Messina?
O! at las' I ondrastand!
You have dugga through da land
Jus' to find your leetla frand,
Giuseppina!"

There was never a more lovable Gael than Tom Daly—may his shadow never grow less!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INDIA MOSAIC
by MARK CHANNING

Over the Counter

The Saturday Review's Guide to Current Attractions

Trade Mark	*Label*	*Contents*	*Flavor*
THE TONTO KID *Henry Herbert Knibbs* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.)	Western	The Tonto Kid had quality and a trigger-finger as smooth as the kiss of a snowflake. Just an ornery lad, the Kid swings from outlaw to a law a'bidin' gent—but only after some gun-play.	Tom Mix in Curls
HORSESHOE RANGE *Michael Crowley* (McBride: $2.)	Western	Thanks for the makins' stranger. The yarn? Wal, Buck goes a'gunnin' after them there snakes which rubbed out his brother and when Buck goes a'gunnin' it's a field day for the undertakers.	Cobra juice
THE STOLEN GOD . *Edison Marshall* (Kinsey: $2.)	Adventure	Knock, knock! Who's there? Siam. Siam who? Siam tired of these adventure gags where the Emerald Buddha is always stolen. Holden, gumshoe, on the trail with the usual tricks and the right pinch.	Trite
TOO MUCH OF EVERYTHING *Philip Wylie* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Novel	Another one about the Wall Street magnate and his worthless family, ruined in the 1929 crash, who find in poverty the key to wisdom and happiness. Then they make some more money, of course.	Dated

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The New Books

Biography

THE CAST IRON MAN: John C. Calhoun and American Democracy. By Arthur Styron. Longmans, Green. 1936. $3.50.

The "cast iron man," it is explained by Mr. Styron, was a descriptive phrase applied to Calhoun by Harriet Martineau—Calhoun, as she went on to say, "who looks as if he had never been born and never could be extinguished." He was extinguished, it would seem, without much ground for dispute, by the Civil War, though it is the thesis of his latest biographer that he was so completely right in his position that a place is assured him among the saints.

It is hard to bring one's self into the temper for a sympathetic reading of a biography whose philosophy runs to so marked a degree counter to the course of civilization. We are asked to assume—and the writer seems to believe—that a community of planters cultivating the land with slave labor is an ideal social condition. An agrarian state in which a few men with their families around them profit from agriculture, carried on under a system of villeinage, is to be regarded as the perfection of human existence. It is easy enough to see and to admit that there was a pleasant comfort in the old South. It produced a number of men who have proud places in American history—a few of them have title to the respect of the valuers and appraisers of public characters in a field larger than the United States. It is a pleasure to recognize the gifts of Calhoun. It is possible, even when disagreeing with his premises and conclusions, to concede that in any reasoning based upon constitutional statement, as well as tradition, he had much right on his side, and one would think that these advantages might satisfy a writer setting forth to emphasize the high points of his life. But Mr. Styron is not content with so obvious a line of treatment; he involves himself in the metaphysical and does not stop short of what many will think only a little way removed from the ridiculous.

When those who spoke of a "moral law" as affecting slavery and who strove—whether with or without discretion—to restrict an evil and stamp it out are rated as industrialists, materialists, nationalists, and Puritans, and are given other names which the author regards as devastating, patient discussion is not very feasible. If the writer reads history in so curious a way and is so archaic in his view of the economical science, to say nothing at all of other branches of knowledge bearing upon social development, it surely must be thought that he has not made a very satisfying contribution to biographical letters.

For a Life of Calhoun it will be better to turn to a volume by the late Gaillard Hunt, a South Carolinian by descent, who had a clear outlook, who could distinguish wrong from right and loss from gain, and who could put a really great figure in his proper frame. Mr. Styron writes engagingly. His style is animated. The narrative has order and fluency. He should seek purer springs for his history and philosophy.

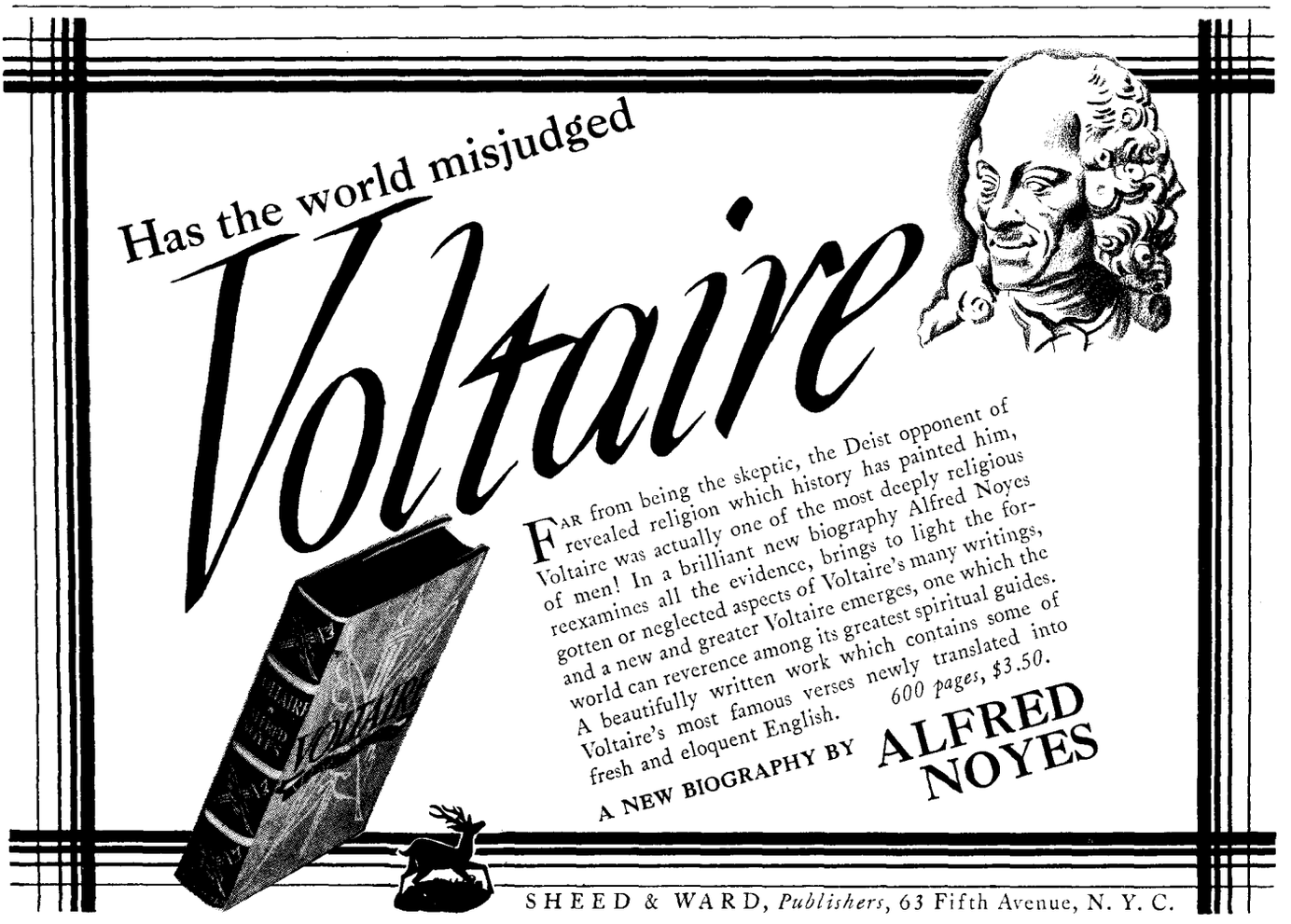
E. P. O.

Fiction

THE RIVER PASTURE. By Judy Van der Veer. Longmans, Green. 1936. $2.

This small book contains the memoirs of a ranch girl whose ranch is actually in the mountains of Southern California. Adventures among cattle and horses, ducks, chickens, geese, and dogs, have made up her life. You wouldn't think that that in itself could make a book, but it does, and a most beguiling one. For it is true, in this instance, what the publishers say of this author. Miss Van der Veer is a natural writer. The book is a rambling diary of small ranch happenings, of the life of the creatures she knows and loves and tends through calving and foaling and misadventure and the final sad farewells as they are sold. Yet its writing makes it a good deal more than that and lifts it to a place among the little natural books we remember, such as Richard Jefferies's "The Story of My Heart." We don't mean that it is at all like that—even as it is utterly unlike "The Natural

(*Continued on next page*)


Has the world misjudged
Voltaire
FAR from being the skeptic, the Deist opponent of revealed religion which history has painted him, Voltaire was actually one of the most deeply religious of men! In a brilliant new biography Alfred Noyes reexamines all the evidence, brings to light the forgotten or neglected aspects of Voltaire's many writings, and a new and greater Voltaire emerges, one which the world can reverence among its greatest spiritual guides. A beautifully written work which contains some of Voltaire's most famous verses newly translated into fresh and eloquent English.
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SHEED & WARD, Publishers, 63 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. C.

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The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

History of Selborne." But there is a vague category in which all three belong, and it is a category in which nature and art link hands.

This quiet chronicle is apt to be overlooked; so we wish to set up a sign-post here: "Don't underrate or overlook 'The River Pasture.'" We read most of it on a transcontinental train, but its quiet, musing narrative drowned out the racket of the journey, and the mating of William, the cow, Fanny's first foaling, the temperament of "Patches," and the extraordinary life of Wucky the Duck became matters of primary import. The book is most attractively made, too, and the decorations by Dorothy Waugh entirely in keeping. So did sunset and evening star on the ranch. But the atmosphere of the book has a peculiar incommunicable enchantment that waits on the reading.

W. R. B.

FAMILY CURSE. By John Hampson. Dodd, Mead. 1936. $2.

A good deal of skill and insight has gone to waste in this picture of a wealthy middle-class family in Birmingham (England). It covers only a single day, the day on which the old matriarch (already pretty much superseded by her eldest daughter) died; a Saturday, to the disgust of her golf-playing sons, who wished she had lasted over till Sunday when there was nothing to do anyway. The curse of the Sumerles was the special variety of human nature that was in them all, and into the story of that one day Mr. Hampson manages to weave all that has happened to them, and what is likely to happen hereafter. But the account of that afternoon at the old mansion is told thirteen times from thirteen different points of view, and by the time you have heard it four or five times you have heard enough. Mr. Hampson has skilfully executed a difficult undertaking, but so does the man who carves the Lord's Prayer on a peanut.

E. D.

MOUNTAIN CATTLE. By Mary Kidder Rak. Houghton Mifflin. 1936. $2.75.

As those who have read "A Cowman's Wife" know, and as those who gain first acquaintance with the scenes through this succeeding story, "Mountain Cattle," are due to know, Mrs. Rak lives upon and helps to run Old Camp Rucker Ranch with headquarters in Rucker Canyon of southeastern Arizona. Nearest supply point, Douglas. The military post of Camp J. A. Rucker was established in White River Canyon in Apache days, and the Rak ranch includes the abandoned properties in its other large holdings. Includes a great variety of other properties, more lively—dogs, cattle, horses, motor vehicles of sorts, rivers, weather, and retainers, of local color, not to omit, among the valuable, Charlie Rak who is the author's cowman husband. These properties, together with neighbors, transients, and fool tourists, all are story properties, submitted by Mrs. Rak with zest, humor, and affection. Life never stales on the Rucker Ranch, except for misfit guests who get no fillip out of workaday adventures. And taken as they come, the chapters form a journal of intimate details of such adventures upon a feudal domain in the border Southwest. Thank you, Mrs. Rak, for this renewed opportunity to "Stop and light, stranger."

E. L. S.

CONTRABANDO. By Karl Detzer. Bobbs-Merrill. 1936. $2.

Here's an adventurous romance of the Imperial Valley, with the U. S. Border Patrol trying to prevent the smuggling of Mexicans and even Chinese across the border. Calexico and Mexicali lie each side the border of California and Mexico; and Ex Turner is American baron of the Rancho Grande where many workers toil over his grapefruit, lettuce, and orange crops. He brooks no interference with his field hands. Tranquilino McCoy, an Irish Mexican, is, of course, in the smuggling business; Joe Carrick of the Border Patrol has a claim against Rancho Grande and is also attracted by Ex Turner's great-niece, Alice Layton. At the same time he is trying to catch McCoy and his gang. Get the set-up?

Mr. Detzer is inclined to be too wordy in the unfolding of his tale and his Tranquilino is not the character he might have made him. There is also too much talky-talk. The author has formerly written stories of the Michigan State Police, and he witnessed the exploits of the Border Patrol himself and knows, in this instance also, the country of which he writes. But authentic as his material is

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"I AM THE FOX" is the story of Selma Temple, twenty-six years old, red-haired and amber-eyed, whose childhood and youth in Iowa left such impressions upon her mind that she was secretly afraid of life. When the novel opens, Selma is employed in New York by a man who loves her and wishes to marry her. Her heart tells her that marriage with him means security, but her mind sees him as the huntsman and herself as the fox. By a skillful transition the reader is told one by one of the episodes that, lacking sane and kindly interpretation, have left such scars on her mind, and meets those people whose part in her life she can never forget.

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and good as are some of his characters, his story still rates with us among the less distinguished novels of its kind. Still, it will give you an accurate view of a part of the country about which you presumably know little. We think you will agree with us that Ex Turner needs something in his makeup that Mr. Detzer has not been able to inject, and that while the book gets exciting toward the end, it winds up in a way well-foreseen. But conditions as stated are plausible and you'll learn a good deal about life on the Border and in the Imperial Valley.

W. R. B.

YOUNG LOVE: Variations on a Theme. By John Erskine. Bobbs-Merrill. 1936. $2.50.

Mr. Erskine states his "Theme" in a light story in a popular-magazine mode, about an editor who thinks he has discovered that the public is weary of intelligent disillusionment in print and has begun to pine for sugared romances of young love. The "Variations" are fourteen unconnected tales on that theme, each of them giving it an unexpected twist. Some of the twists are ironic, some cynical, some sentimental. Taken together, the fourteen resemble a row of meringues artfully tinted to produce an illusion of contrast. All of them have the same taste.

There is doubtless much to be said for meringues—always provided that you do not happen to be looking for bread.

W. F.

MR. TUTT TAKES THE STAND. By Arthur Train. Scribners. 1936. $2.

The countless friends of Mr. Ephraim Tutt, counsellor at law (and what law, sometimes!), will be pleased to learn that he is still in business at the old stand, rescuing youthful innocence wrongly accused, relieving aged industry threatened with foreclosure, uniting loving hearts—and all under cover of obscure decisions and recondite points in the statutes that make his achievements stick. A reviewer whose acquaintance with Mr. Tutt's activities has not been as continuous as it should have been cannot help wondering what has become of his dull but dogged pre-war partner, Tutt without the Mister; but that query can be passed as irrelevant. Mr. Tutt is as standardized and dependable a commodity as Camels or Quaker Oats; the ten stories in this volume show that age cannot wither him.

E. D.

THE MOON'S NO FOOL. By T. S. Matthews. Random House. 1936. $2.

Mr. Matthews used to write pungent reviews for *The New Republic* and is now on the staff of *Time Magazine*. This excursion of his into symbolical fantasy first was published by Robert Graves and Laura Riding of the Seizin Press in London and Majorca. The author gave us formerly a novel founded on the Ruth Snyder-Judd Gray case.

From a critic of books one expects a good deal, and in this instance, to this particular reviewer, Mr. Mathews does not live up to expectations. His style is lucid without being brilliant, his story is most readable. But Ben, the protagonist of the tale, who wants to be like his much more extravert friend Leo (in fact ends up by identifying himself with that friend, "Had Leo ever been more than a part of me that needed burying?") and bears upon his infant soul the invocations of three aunts—Mirabel the snob—Winnie the sentimentalist—and Miserable Sarah the ironic realist—all the godparents of the babe—this Ben is just not an interesting enough person for us to care greatly what happens to him. He is an excessively pious young man at first, and then in a quite unreal way is projected into a day-dream world of high-life. There he encounters the worst forms of worldly cynicism and in repulsion is cast into a nightmare (in part, it may be said, quite engaging and a new kind of nonsense altogether). He emerges to find that Miserable Sarah, the despised godmother, was right and sane; though to this reviewer there are a good many loose ends he should have liked to see tied more neatly.

Read this novel—it is short—for entertainment, for originality, for the caricatures of people (not real people.) It is in no sense profound, but it is agreeable light reading with a dash of moralistic flavoring. A curiosity of literature—an olive or an artichoke. The trouble is it is rather thin.

W. R. B.

Julian Duguid

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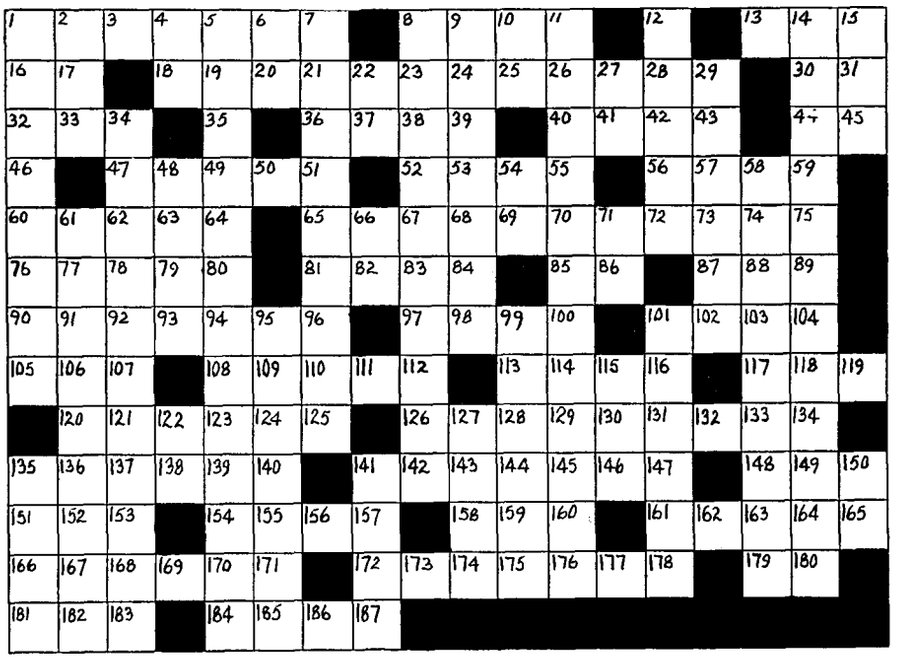
Double-Crostics: No. 127

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-seven words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Unless otherwise indicated, the author is English or American.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 16 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

I. Muse of lyric poetry.

II. Dispersing in parting.

III. Heap of stones raised by Jacob and Laban.

IV. Putting on airs (colloq.).

V. Goddess of Wisdom (Egypt.).

VI. Eldest son of French King.

VII. Swiss-American composer (1880—).

VIII. Preternatural.

IX. Dutch painter (1606-69).

X. 8th Avatar of Vishnu (Hindu).

XI. Hebrew prophet.

XII. Sudden outburst of anger (comp.).

XIII. Ransomed.

XIV. Celestial.

XV. Musical symbols.

XVI. Land of Cockneys.

XVII. Incomplete evasive facts (comp.).

XVIII. Round-up.

XIX. A racing crew.

XX. Motto of Harvard.

XXI. Barbarians who overran Italy (479 A.D.).

XXII. River of Forgetfulness.

XXIII. Not deserving.

XXIV. God of Wisdom (Egypt.).

XXV. Permeated.

XXVI. Greek letter.

XXVII. Inert gaseous element.

WORDS

62 128 73 89 179

160 94 180 11 30 147 129 46 17 117

40 48 15 26 158 45

151 25 67 78 178 118

54 119 145 44 102

157 137 186 143 127 121 159

165 154 86 76 182

5 116 33 20 69 97 61 166 84

112 167 135 1 106 9 79 85 122

80 38 90 21 59 31 115

107 120 65 174 77 4

47 132 12 52 183 71 81

139 96 51 175 131 170 27 32

16 100 141 75 34 125 83 50

173 14 74 140 126

176 108 3 42 35 57 152 39 103

184 105 10 36 60 28 156 70 98 6

162 185 13 136 24

49 172 18 23 161

130 7 187 63 113 92 29

88 22 181 82 155 55 142 58 110 168

124 43 148 8 2

164 146 56 68 19 177 149 104

109 114 169 123 153

53 91 144 64 133 138 87 41 101 111 134

150 66 171 93 99

72 37 163 95

Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

☞Harry Forman's *The Story of Prophecy* will give you quite a number of starts and shudders. It appears from Mr. Forman's exciting book that ever since the time of the Great Pyramid astrologers and magi of all sorts have predicted September 15, 1936 as the date of some sort of Red Letter Day, whether for weal or wo. (☞We prefer wo without the e, it sounds less dire.) ☞Simon & Schuster hastens to point that that will be the publication date of Ernest Bates's renovated Bible. ☞Also it will be the date when Old Polysyllable Quercus returns to work. ☞Using the method adopted by a sybil to scare a King of Prussia, Old Q. figures the next World Epoch for 1937, thus:—

1918
1
9
1
8
———
1937

☞And after that, by the same calculus, 1957. ☞But see the cross-section of the Great Pyramid, p. 55 of Forman's book, and scratch your poll.

☞Elise Noyes of the Stamford (Conn.) Bookstore says Old Q. is too late with some of the titles suggested for his pseudonymous book. *Small Wares* has been used by Little, Brown, and *Soup to Nuts* by Macrae-Smith. ☞Harold Kinsey is finding divinity profitable and announces Aimee McPherson's *Give Me My Own God* for September. ☞The autumn list of Studio Publications (381 Fourth Avenue, N. Y.) is exciting as usual. There is no better day in the month than when the *Studio* reaches this desk; everyone who has "his eyeballs vexed and tired" with print can get a thrill of pictorial delight from that magazine and its fellow-publications.

☞Malcolm W. Bingay, columnist of the Detroit *Free Press,* says he's looking for a lawyer to start suit for $2.50 against reviewers who persuaded him to buy *Eyeless in Gaza.* ☞The characters in the book, cries Mr. Bingay, are mostly "perverts, degenerates, or just plain neurotics. . . . Huxley's philosophy is as shallow as a plate of pea soup and just about as clear." ☞Reviews of the moving picture "The Devil Doll," made from A. Merritt's shocker *Burn, Witch, Burn!,* sound as though it were a very interesting picture with good trick photography. The movies are on the right track when they tackle fantasy. ☞Beatrice Meyers of the Children's Book Shop in Rochester, N. Y., says "Although ants are really not books, we are having a good time selling the Austin Ant Houses. They make a wonderful leader and bring in people who go out with books besides." Go to the ant, thou sluggard, is her suggestion to the specialty shops. ☞Interested to see that Timms and Howard, Syracuse, N. Y., offer an 1851 *Moby Dick,* "clean and sound copy, unshaken," for $350. ☞Old cold-blooded Q. likes to see people enthusiastic and relishes the zymogenic zeal of Beatrice Warde in her preface to Irvin Haas's *Bruce Rogers: A*

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Bibliography (Peter Pauper Press)—which will, she says, "pour kerosene on the already blazing altars." ☞Glad to see that Appleton-Century have put back in print Dr. J. E. Harry's *Dog and Dogs*, one of the best books about that emotional animal who has flattered man so successfully. This book is a stock item.

Split Second Exposure

By Louis Greenfield

The guy had class. And his racket, gents, was peddling tomes.

The town—Washington; the state—Connecticut and the Parnassusian baby spotting himself at a traffic intersection where road meets road and the home folk meet the summer dwellers. The book guy opened shop. The equipment and stock were compact. A Ford station wagon with mobile bookshelves which eased their way to the tip of the tail board—a miniature bookshop with three hundred volumes, diverse of subject and title. A placard tacked atop the center shelf carried the tip-off:

THE BOOK WAGON
BOOKS FOR SALE
Fiction——Non-fiction

And business? Let the literary gent do the gabbing: Business is strictly a gas, oil, three meals, and a tourist house flop proposition. The profits meet only these necessities. One first must choose a town that has no bookstore and secondly one must see the selectman of the town or village for permission to peddle his wares. Choose a community where summer visitors are numerous and stock up on many of the current titles and all the best sellers. In the short time here eighty percent of sales were made to the visitors and their selections were *The Last Puritan; Gone with the Wind; The Way of a Transgressor; Eyeless in Gaza; Sanfelice*, with many requests for *I Write As I Please* and *Personal History*. The Doubleday, Doran reprints, particularly *Birds of America*, sell well. The new D.D. series in literature garnered several sales with Gissing's two volume *Workers in the Dawn* leading this dollar group.

When you open shop—stay put. People who are driving by spy your joint and come back. The requests for titles are as numerous as that of a large bookshop. Detective stories are in demand. In choosing your town find out if any writers or authors live in the vicinity. If authors, always carry several of their titles. With Phil Stong living in Washington and Charles Beard in New Milford, a short distance away, The Book Wagon was stumped with only one title by Charles Beard—*The Rise of American Civilization*—and none of Stong's. One learns all this later.

Do not hit the libraries for any book business. Go in and make yourself acquainted but the peddling angle is off. Discounts to libraries are too large and even if a possible sale is made the purchase must be O.K'd by a library board.

Take all the gags and pretty talk with good grace. Though you may hear for the eighty-fourth time by nice ladies, "How grand! This is what I always wanted to do," put on that personality smile and flash the molars—that's all.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept. Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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LICENSED PILOT, also sculptor, hack, will instruct personable young woman in flying in modern airplane exchange for help with art and "literary efforts," which include advertising. Box 503-B.

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DAILY BREAD needed by trio of aspiring perfectionists for project with possibilities of (not too) solid achievement just ahead. Further information IF you are interested. Box 519-B.

LITERARY LADY, 25, desires correspondence with cultured, educated gentleman who makes sincere efforts towards cultivating a broad mind and understanding heart. Box 506-B.

EGGS—Will buy fresh farm products for city route. Box 508-B.

GENTLEMAN, forty-five, interested in Art and Literature, seeks stimulating correspondence with lady. Box 509-B.

WANTED by middle-aged woman, alert, with broad experience, position as companion to woman with horizons. If you let me know the duties required I shall tell you frankly whether I could hope to fill them. Box 510-B.

YOUNG MANHATTAN PHOTOGRAPHER, imaginative, broad interests, trained, wishes to illustrate your material through her vivid and convincing medium. Collaborate with author or group. Go anywhere. Box 511-B.

BACK FROM ENGLAND October first. Correspondence forwarded, offers and inquiries promptly answered until then. Available part or full time work critical, reviewing, research, publishing, assistant editorial, bookshop, journalistic, secretarial fields. Exceptional references and experience. Box 512-B.

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PERSONALS

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MAN, THIRTIES—Outdoor lover, seeks position country. References. Box 517-B.

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by GEORGE MACKANESS

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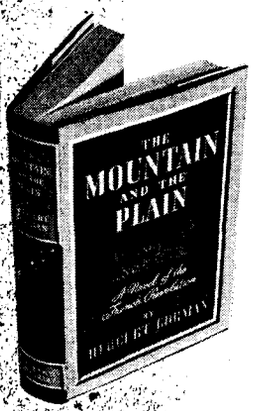

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